

Series I
Correspondence,
1932-1973

Box 4, Folder 3

February 12, 1951 -
May 10, 1951

0919

12 February 1951

Dear Captain Rochefort:

For some years the Special Projects Section at the Naval War College has been working on the critical analyses of the major naval battles of World War II. To date, three of these battles have been completed. Two of them have been out in the fleet for several years, viz, Coral Sea and Midway. The third battle, the Battle of Savo Island, will be in the mail this week, and will be in the hands of CINCPAC shortly.

My staff has consisted, usually, of two Captains and two Commanders. Through some mistake the staff was cut to two, but BuPers has now authorized the strength of four officers to be re-established. I am therefore seeking two competent retired officers of the rank, preferably, of Captain, to fill these billets. One is to be a naval aviator; the other, general line.

No name has come to me with greater support than your name. You have been recommended by Admiral Felix Johnson, the Chief of ONI, and by Admiral Casey Green, the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel. Vice Admiral Conolly, the President of the Naval War College, also recommended you to me. So, I am writing to you to ask you if you will take a job in the War College working in this Section for the next few years on the Battle for Leyte Gulf, which is our present assignment.

In order that you may understand what we are doing here, and what I particularly desire you to accomplish, I will discuss the situation:-- First, my present staff consists of myself and Commander Paul Hartmann, who is a Naval Aviator, plus one Chief Yeoman and one Yeoman Second Class. We are at present working mostly on the BLUE side. We are so short handed that we have been delayed in working on the ORANGE side. I am particularly anxious to obtain your services to assist me in working up the ORANGE side for this battle, although, naturally, we all work on both sides. There are not too many ORANGE translations available, at present. However, I have one translator, a Mr. Clarke Kawakami, working in Washington, translating documents on the action, and I have recently received approval from Operations to obtain one, and maybe two, more translators to expedite translations. The work I wish you to do should be right down your alley, as it is on matters on which you are as well qualified as any officer in the Navy.

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For your information we are not writing history as such here. We are analyzing certain of the naval battles, and we are determining whether the Commanders did well or not, and why. These are studies of command, and therefore are very high level. They have already received high encomiums from high command, including the National War College, and have been classed as confidential by the Chief of Naval Operations, because "they explored so thoroughly." I am sure, therefore, that you would enjoy the work greatly.

Should you desire this assignment, it will be necessary for me - or rather for the President of the Naval War College - to ask for your services, and according to both Admiral Johnson and Admiral Green, in view of the importance of this work here, your retention on active duty will be approved. It would appear as if you would report here about July 1st.

Newport is a very nice place. Perhaps you know all about it, but if you don't you might realize that the summers are quite famous and the winters - at least this winter - are reasonably mild, despite the reports in the papers.

You would come back to duty as a Captain and would, naturally, draw all the emoluments that go with that rank. This, presumably, is what you are drawing in the Pacific today.

I should appreciate a reply from you presently, as to whether you can accept this assignment, as I will have to look for some one else if it does not suit your taste.

With warmest personal regards to yourself and with hopes that you will give me a favorable reply, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.
Commodore, U. S. Navy.

Captain Joseph Rochefort, USN,
c/o Headquarters,
Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet,
Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

0921

15 February 1951

Dear Sir:

I am quite anxious to obtain the home address of Rear Admiral Ralph W. Christie, USN (Ret), as I desire to communicate with him concerning War College matters.

In order to save time I am making this a personal letter.

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES,
Commodore, U. S. Navy.

Officer in Charge,
Officer Locator Section (Pers-E244),
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0922

15 February 1951

Dear John:

On 22 November the War College addressed a letter to the Director, Naval Records and History, asking for certain information concerning the operations of submarines in the Pacific and SOWESPAC during the Leyte Operation. In this letter the War College pointed out that certain information was available here in the War College Archives, including the microfilm, but stressed the point that this information was quite inadequate. On 18 December the Director, Naval Records and History advised the War College that the information desired was not available.

I am writing to you to ask if you won't have your assistants look a little more fully into their files to see if some of this information cannot be obtained? Commander ALLIED Naval Forces, SOWESPAC, who was also Commander SEVENTH Fleet, on September 25th, 1944, issued his CANF SWPA Operation Plan No. 12-44 and there in paragraph 3(h) he stated:

"Submarines, while continuing present missions to the fullest extent practicable, station strong offensive and reconnaissance patrols and lifeguard submarines in accordance with instructions to be issued by Commander SEVENTH FLEET. In general operations will be conducted to interdict and report enemy surface forces in the approaches to our movement routes and objective area."

If any basic instructions were issued by Commander ALLIED Naval Forces in accordance with this directive, they are not to be found in the War College Archives. It is most important to this study to discover how Commander ALLIED Naval Forces planned to employ his submarines. Might not the instructions be found somewhere in your files?

In studying the submarine operations, it seems probable that Commander SEVENTH Fleet, in addition sometime around October 11th, directed by despatch that certain submarine operations in support of KING II - the Leyte Operation - be accomplished. It is not clear what these submarine operations were, but some of the submarines appear to have been diverted from their present missions to duties connected with the Leyte Operation.

It seems very surprising that the orders issued to the SOWESPAC submarines, when starting on their patrols, are not available in the Archives. Certainly they must have been available to someone when the submarine histories were written; but these submarine histories, in the portions desired by the War College for reference, are very inaccurate indeed, and cannot in any

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way be employed for a command study.

As regards the operations in the SOWESPAC, we would like to have here the orders to each of the following submarines which were on patrol during October 1944:

COBIA
BAYA
BREAM
CERO
DACE
ANGLER
HAMMERHEAD

ROCK
GURNARD
GUITARRO
RATON
DARTER
COD
NARWHAL

BERGALL
HOE
PADDLE
RAY
BLUEGILL
BONEFISH
NAUTILUS

Also, the Netherlands Submarine SWAARDVISCH and the British Submarines STOIC, SIRDAR, TANTIVY, TANTALUS.

The movements of these submarines are particularly desired because in studying the background of this action, it is important to know what command decisions were being made to insure that the operations went off successfully. Submarines were an important part of this operation, and they must be given their due in the write-up.

If we can obtain the patrol orders for the above submarines, and if we can obtain the changes in their locations to support the Leyte Operation, we can then determine the correctness of the strategical dispositions. There should be despatches from Commander SEVENTH Fleet and also from Commander Submarines, SEVENTH Fleet, which will give the above data.

May I ask your help?

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral John B. Heffernan, USN,
Office of Naval Records and History,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0924

21 February 1951

Dear George:

It seems very difficult for you to get away from me, but I am always seeking something. However, in this case what I seek is something very simple. I wish to locate Captain James E. Leeper, 60189, USN. Can you obtain his address for me? Very frankly, I don't know whether he is on active duty or retired, although very likely he is on active duty. It is for this reason I am addressing this communication to you.

The allowance of the Special Projects Section of the War College, as you know, has been increased by two billets. The ACNO (Personnel), Admiral Casey Green, stated that these billets will be made permanent, and will be designated as Captain billets. In addition, they are supposed to be filled by retired officers. On the recommendation of the Chief of Naval Intelligence (Admiral Felix Johnson) and Admiral Green, I was provided with a name of an officer who appears most desirable for one of these billets. I wrote this officer, who is now on the retired list, and found that he wished the assignment. The War College has therefore submitted an official request for his services. This officer is Captain Joseph J. Rochefort, presently on duty with the Evaluation Group of the Pacific Fleet. Rochefort stated that he would be available in April or May. I hope, therefore, that his orders will soon be forthcoming.

In this connection I have written to Admiral McCormick, Admiral Green, and Admiral Watkins, on this matter so, in view of your connection with Admiral Watkins, it is quite possible that you are thoroughly familiar with the whole situation.

With warmest personal regards and appreciation for anything you may accomplish for me, I am, as always,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Captain George C. Towner, USN,
(Officer Detail Section), Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0925

21 February 1951

Dear Carl:

In November the President of the War College asked the Director of Naval Records and History (OP-29) for copies of the dispatches issued by COM7THFLT during the Battle for Leyte Gulf. The Director of Naval Records and History sent copies of these dispatches to the War College, but stated that the TOP SECRET classification would have to be maintained.

There surely is some mistake. These dispatches certainly should be downgraded to at least confidential, as otherwise they cannot be used.

For your information this is the first occasion where this office has encountered such a restriction on any dispatches. Perhaps it has something to do with cryptographic security, but if the messages are paraphrased by this command and only quoted as necessary to explain some point, it seems to me that their security would be adequately maintained thereby.

For your information the THIRD Fleet dispatches received during the Leyte action, some of which are included in the subject SEVENTH Fleet dispatches, were downgraded by COMINCH in 1945, and the restriction on this command was simply this: "Not to be reproduced without paraphrasing."

To whom do I write and is it necessary to forward the subject dispatches, in order to have them downgraded?

Best regards, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral Carl F. Espe, USN,
Room 5C572, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0926

26 February 1951

Dear Mr. Roessle:

The other day I was notified by the Commanding Officer of the Naval Photographic Laboratory that the new contract for the Battle of Midway was signed. I was delighted to hear this and hope that the type of contract you got was what you desired.

Needless to say, the reason for the sudden expediting of the contract was that this office discovered the long delays inherent to signing such a contract, even though it was a contract additional to the one already completed. So the Naval War College took exception to the unwarranted delay with the result that within about two weeks the whole affair was completed.

We are all very anxious that this movie of Midway shall be tip-top; therefore, I am volunteering any help that I personally may be able to give to assist you in completing the film. If you will recollect, the principal objections to the movie, as shown up here, were two: (1) the fact that the voice was coached to give an incorrect evaluation. I'm quite sure that you understand this thoroughly and that, in the corrections to the movie, this peculiar tonal quality will be removed wherever possible. As a matter of fact, in rewriting the script I tried to reword the bad spots so that if the actor or NPL's representative tried to give it an incorrect evaluation through tone, it could not be done. I don't know whether I succeeded or not. (2) The unfortunate inference that Admiral Theobald, who was the Commander in the Aleutians, had done poorly. Although there is some opinion that he did not do well later, the facts are that at this time he did fairly well. The book can only discuss the situation existent at the time of the Battle of Midway, and cannot place in the story an inference gained from later operations. It should be clear that the script and the tone were both wrongly worded and spoken. This I feel sure you will clear up.

Please give my best regards to Mr. Speidel and Mr. Hanousek, and as for yourself, my best wishes go with you and with your efforts to secure a very fine movie!

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Mr. Herman Roessle,
Audio Productions, Inc.,
630 Ninth Avenue,
New York 19, New York.

0927

27 February 1951

Dear Rollo:

This note is to thank you very much for sending me the copies of Admiral Halsey's lecture before the Air University. I glanced through it, and I can see that it is highly interesting and should be very helpful to us here when we get to that phase of the analysis. At the present time, however, as we are working up the background only and as this will take a very long time, I am not going to find the speech of any particular immediate help.

I should like to have been at the Air University to hear Admiral Halsey under assault, as it were, from the aviators down there, as I have no doubt but what they had a lot to say concerning Admiral Halsey's activities. It is for that reason that I shall appreciate the answers to the questions and which you have promised to send me. Someday, long hence from now, I will ask you to read what we have produced here, so that we may gain the advantage of your direct participation in this action, as well as the benefit of your long experience.

Once again, many thanks for your kindness in thinking of me by sending me this welcome address.

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Captain R. E. Wilson, USN,
Military Sea Transportation Service,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0928

2 March 1951

Dear Commander Clark:

This is merely a blow in the dark, but you have been recommended to me as the Officer-in-Charge of the section responsible for handling communication security.

The Special Projects Section of the War College is preparing studies of the major Naval battles of World War II, and at the present time is engaged in a study of the Battle for Leyte Gulf. It has been noted in studying the communications throughout the battle that they are classified as top secret, secret, confidential, and restricted. As Head of the Section, I have no concern about the confidential and the restricted messages, as the classification of our studies is confidential. However, I am greatly concerned about the top secret and secret dispatches, as there is evidently some misunderstanding about them, and I cannot for the life of me understand why. As an example, let me point out that we have received dispatches from the Office of Naval Records and History marked "Top Secret", and we have the same dispatches here marked down from top secret to "secret" as far back as 1945. The Battle for Leyte Gulf must include many of these dispatches, either in substance or in paraphrased form, or the study cannot be made at all. Heretofore in our previous studies - Coral Sea, Midway and Savo Island - the data employed was generally secret, but the CNO directed that the books be classified as confidential, for tactical reasons more than any communication reason. Therefore, I cannot see why all dispatches connected with the Leyte Gulf operation of 1944, which occurred seven years ago, cannot be classified as confidential or less.

I am writing to you to discover (a) whether you are the officer to whom we should write to obtain a lower classification of these dispatches, and (b) if you are not, to whom do we write?

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES,
Commodore, U.S. Navy.

Commander C. F. Clark, USN,
Naval Security Station,
3801 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, D.C.

0929

14 March 1951

Dear George:

The President of the War College has received your letter in which you state that you plan to order Captain Joseph J. Rochefort to duty here about May. Needless to say, I am gratified to see your prompt action in this matter, and appreciate the assistance you have rendered me in this case.

I note that in paragraph 2 of this letter that Captain Rochefort will be ordered to the Staff of the President of the War College. This is correct, but I think it would be wise in this case to add to his orders the same restriction that is on mine, viz, "for duty in connection with analyses of Naval engagements during World War II."

It is important to accomplish this on his orders if you can do so, because the reason I am having difficulty with my staff now is simply that Admiral Beary, while President of the War College, and while I was away in California, decided that he needed my staff in his correspondence section, and promptly detached one of my two officers - I was light one at the time, as although my allowance had been set at three the War College allowed me four - and he also detached all of my civilian personnel, which were secretaries. When I returned and remonstrated, he said that for Leyte Gulf he would see that I get my staff back, or its equivalent, and pledged his word as did Admiral Brown to that effect. That is why I agreed to do Leyte Gulf. Its now taken me eight months to try and get replacements.

It is our hope here in this section, and it is also the hope of the President of the War College, that retired officers being assigned here, will not be subject to being subsequently detached to other duties, except, of course, in an emergency.

Anyway, this is thanks again for anything you can do.

As ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Captain George C. Towner, USN,
(Officer Detail Section),
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D.C.

0930

14 March 1951

Dear Germany:

As you are, in reality, my boss, since our directives to write these battles come from the CNO via your office, I am writing to you to ask for a little assistance. We have a translator lined up - a Mrs. Tanaka. Everything has been proceeding nicely - it may still be - and Mrs. Tanaka is about to be signed up. However, according to my senior translator, Mr. Kawakami, there may be a difficulty connected with it. It seems that there appears to be a plan underway to charge Mrs. Tanaka to Op-29. I suppose that this is all right, providing the funds are made available to Op-29, so that Admiral Heffernan won't feel that he is being imposed upon by the War College. However, as everyone watches their finances pretty closely, it is not unlikely that if funds are not made available to Admiral Heffernan, he may scream aloud and cause me to lose Mrs. Tanaka. Frankly, I do not know to whom she may be charged.

Actually, the question of finances should not be important, as Charlie Wellborn told me, before he was detached, that the engagement of this translator met with his approval, and that there was plenty of money for it. Admiral McCormick told me he realized the necessity for additional translators, and Admiral Low, who really has nothing to do with it, also concurred in the necessity for getting these translations done, and made available to me as soon as possible. Needless to say, there is plenty to translate, and I hope to obtain one more translator, if possible, in addition to Mrs. Tanaka.

As translators are very difficult to obtain, and as we have worked hard and long to discover Mrs. Tanaka - who, by the way, I have not seen, but who is highly recommended - I should appreciate your interest if you would pass the word which will straighten this out. I feel confident that a word from you will do the trick. Perhaps you have already done so, as Captain Renken is fully familiar with the above.

With warmest personal regards, and with hopes to see you one of these days when I am down in Washington, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral M. E. Curts, USN,
(ACNO Readiness), Room 4E552,
Pentagon Building, Navy Department,
Washington, D. C.

0931

15 March 1951

Dear Captain Rochefort:

You will be delighted to know that within the last several days the War College has received confirmation of the Department's plan to order you to duty at the Naval War College, for service in the Special Projects Section. In fact, the Department's letter states that in May these orders will be issued.

Needless to say, we are all quite happy about this, and look forward to your arrival with interest and satisfaction.

I am telling you about this now so that you won't have to worry any more about it, although it is not improbable that the Bureau has already notified you.

With warmest personal regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Captain Joseph J. Rochefort, USN,
c/o Headquarters,
Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet,
Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

R.W. BATES.

0932

19 March 1951

Dear Ralph:

The Special Projects Section of the Naval War College is working on the Battle for Leyte Gulf. Great difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the orders for the submarines issued by Task Forces SEVENTY ONE and SEVENTY TWO, which were under your command during that time. We have succeeded in discovering the patrol reports, but we have been completely unable to discover the basic orders under which they operated, as well as any dispatches issued to them during October 1944, which might affect their position for the Battle for Leyte Gulf (KING II). General MacArthur stated in a dispatch to CINCPAC on October 11th that the submarines would be assigned in certain definite positions.

Do you happen to know, or do you happen to have in your possession the original orders or copies of the original orders issued by you to your submarines, or copies of the dispatches issued by you, and/or anything else which might be of interest in giving the submarines their proper position in this action? If you have them and will mail them to us, we will promise to take good care of them and return them to you safe and sound.

I received a letter from Dave Collins the other day, and it was nice to hear from him. Dave is as funny as usual. He stated that he was writing me because he heard that I was claiming that he had knocked me down at a football game against Penn State when we were plebes, and caused us to lose a sure touchdown. Dave said that I had knocked him down and referred the matter to now Rear Admiral Dicky Byrd, who was the quarterback. I saw Byrd in Washington the other day, and he said Dave was crazy - that it was Dave who had knocked me down. Dave was playing halfback at the time, while I was playing fullback, and therefore Dave was behind me. Actually, the argument wasn't serious at all, and was really a laugh!

Everyone is always interested in how you are. Whether you have any information or not I hope you will tell me a little about yourself. I hear rumors that you are married again, but only rumors.

As for myself, I have been writing the critical analyses of the major Naval battles of World War II, and have completed three of them - Coral Sea, Midway, Savo Island. I am now on Leyte Gulf.

As you perhaps remember, I was retired in 1949 for a left bundle branch block of my heart. However, I am doing all right.

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral Ralph W. Christie, USN (Ret),
2244 Vallejo Street,
San Francisco, California.

0933

19 March 1951

Dear Jimmy:

We are collecting data for the Battle for Leyte Gulf, and are endeavoring to work up the background for the battle. We are having particular difficulty with your submarines - rather they were Christie's submarines at that time - but you relieved him shortly thereafter.

A Captain who heard that we were seeking information about the submarines, came in here the other day and said that Admiral James Fife had taken custody of this material before leaving for the Philippines, and that he had it in the Philippines in the Spring of 1946. Naturally, none of us know how accurate this is, or whether you ever had them at all. For your information, if you do have them, I wish to say that we are unable to discover the basic orders issued to the Allied submarines of Task Forces SEVENTY ONE and SEVENTY TWO during the Leyte Operation, October 1944, and in addition, we are unable to locate any dispatches issued which would assign them new stations during this operation. We are particularly interested in the orders assigning the SOWESPAC submarines to stations for KING II, which was the Leyte operation. General MacArthur on October 11th, sent out a dispatch stating that the submarines would be disposed in certain positions, but we cannot find that this statement became effective, although we know that orders changing their stations were received by some of the submarines.

Can you help us in this matter? If you haven't these submarine papers, can you advise us where they are? We have seen the Historian, we have written to the Submarine Base, we have sought about everywhere, and the answers are still about fifty percent of what we desire.

I suppose that one of these days I will be down in Washington, and I shall look forward, of course, to seeing you again. Meanwhile, I hope you will have read the last product - the Battle of Savo Island - and found it to your liking.

With warmest personal regards to yourself and to Woo Duncan, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral James Fife, USN,
Room 4E588, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0934

20 March 1951

Dear George:

Thank you very much for your interest in the Rochefort case. I will bother you no more about it, but when he arrives here I will issue you a personal note of gratification.

I am always seeking something 'tho, and here I am seeking again. Can you have one of your assistants make me out a list of the officers of heavier-than-air training who are retiring this June? As you know, I am trying to find an additional aviator. This is quite important as the amount of Air in this operation is tremendous. It hasn't been too vital to have him until now, because we have been collecting data mostly, but I should like to get a competent officer of aviation background for the vacant desk in my allowance. I should like a biography of each of these officers also, so that I might determine from the biography something about the officer. I am not the sole deciding factor in this matter, as Admiral Conolly quite properly is very anxious to insure that only officers of the highest quality are on the Staff of the War College.

It was kind of you to recommend a gentleman the other day, but unfortunately he did not appear to fit the War College requirements, in spite of the fact that I am personally quite friendly with him.

I don't care whether these officers are to be retired as flag officers or not, but I should prefer that they not be, as my experience has been that officers who are flag officers on the retired list are reluctant to reduce their rank and come back as Captains, and are constantly bitter about it. So, if you have any of these officers who are to retire as Captains, they will probably have an inside track, but not necessarily so. If you have any suggestions of officers who have already retired, it might be a very good thing to have a few of them also.

When is the next selection board? I hear rumors that the anti-plucking board will meet in June, and the selection board in July.

With warmest personal regards, and with hopes that I am not too much of a damned nuisance, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Captain George C. Towner, USN
(Officer Detail Section),
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0935

20 March 1951

Dear John:

I am writing this letter to you as a sort of an "apologia pro vita mea," if I quote your good friend, Samuel Morison. I feel very badly at having to call upon you so frequently for services which I realize may well be above your capabilities. It is extremely unfortunate, but it is all that I can do, and therefore, as just like in battle we had to fall back on the good ship TENNESSEE, now I have to fall back on her Skipper for assistance.

I know that it must make you feel rather bitter, not so much at me, but at the powers that be, because you have to return my requests with very little accomplished. Why the Navy doesn't allow you to have a much bigger staff so that your records can be searched on request, I do not know. That is a problem for others, but needless to say, I am sure that it is as disappointing to you as it is to me. I want you to know that I appreciate what you have done and I will appreciate what you will do in the future for my section.

I have written you an official letter from the President of the War College requesting that certain dispatches be blown up and sent back here. You did this for the Commander SEVENTH Fleet dispatches very successfully. I hope to have the same good fortune regarding our last two letters. The one we are particularly interested in is for copies of all dispatches issued by CINCPAC-CINCPOA concerning the Leyte operation. Actually, this letter was not worded quite correctly, and although a correction was put out explaining that we desired dispatches to the Commander THIRD Fleet, who was also Commander Western Pacific Task Forces, we confused the issue by sticking a second paragraph in the correction letter, Serial 1486, referring to the messages received by Commander THIRD Fleet, which is not what we requested in the first letter. So, if it won't confuse you too much, I would like to say that what we are asking for in these two letters is all the messages issued by CINCPAC-CINCPOA during the Battle for Leyte Gulf to CINCSWPA, Commander THIRD Fleet (Commander Western Pacific Task Forces), Commander Naval Group China, and to those submarines operating in support of KING II. The thought about the submarines came from Captain Collins on the Staff of the National War College, who was the Assistant Operations Officer for CINCPOA, who stated that CINCPOA took over the operations of the submarines during the Leyte operation. In addition, we should like copies of the dispatches received by CINCPOA concerning Leyte Gulf, as well as those originated by him.

For your information, after you have accomplished this, we plan to ask for the dispatches issued and received by CINCSWPA (COMSOWESPAC), and the same for CTF 77.

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I don't mind bothering you about this because our WAVES here say that this work is being done by the Communication WAVES in Washington during the mid-watch, which is probably a good thing for them to do.

I appreciated very much Sam Morrison's write-up of me and my office in his speech before the American Historical Association, "Faith of a Historian." Sam is a very fine man, and his approval is high praise, so I feel quite gratified. Thanks for any friendly words that you may have said to him about my office.

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral John B. Heffernan, USN,
Room 2509 MN, Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0937

1 April 1951

Captain James E. Leeper, USN,
Andrews Air Force Base,
Maryland.

Dear Captain Leeper:

I am writing you in connection with an analytical study of the Battle for Leyte Gulf now being made by the War College. We are encountering some difficulty in determining the command relations between Naval Air Force, SEVENTH Fleet (TF 73) and the Army Air Force in the SouthWest Pacific. The records available to the War College indicate that you were Chief of Staff to RAdm Frank. D. Wagner and possibly your recollections of the command organization can clarify the points of doubt.

The main point to be established is:

Did the Navy land and tender based air in the SouthWest Pacific (Naval Air, SEVENTH Fleet and/or TF 73) operate

- (1) As a unit intact under RAdm Wagner's command?
- (2) With some of its squadrons directly under RAdm Wagner and other units placed under the operational control of various Army Air Force commanders?
- (3) With all of its squadrons parcelled out to the operational control of various Army Air Force commanders?

In addition to TF 73 it should be noted that RAdm Wagner was also CTG 70.2 and as such he operated directly under VAdm Kinkaid with this anti-submarine group which on 17 October 1944 was composed of SAN PABLO (AVP-30), 4 PBV-5s of VPB-11, and CORTDIV 33.

For your information Admiral Wagner's report of the operation states:

"All aircraft of Task Force 73 operated under the operational control of Commander Allied Air Force, Lieutenant General Kenney, who in turn delegated control to the Commanding General FIFTH and THIRTEENTH Air Forces as appropriate."

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In his Operation Order for TF 73 for this operation Admiral Wagner directed his task groups and units to:

"Conduct day search and offensive reconnaissance and strike missions as ordered by Commanding General FIFTH or THIRTEENTH Air Forces, either directly or through the Task Force Commander."

General Kenney, Commander Allied Air Force, SWPA, in his Operating Instructions No. 71 states:

"Aircraft SEVENTH Fleet will release to the operational control of the FIFTH Air Force all shore and tender based aircraft operating within the FIFTH Air Force Area of responsibility and later to the control of the THIRTEENTH Air Force when the latter assumes control of operations from Morotai."

Further records now available here show CG 5 AF giving daily orders in his Fragmentary Field Orders to the Navy squadrons based at Morotai to carry out Search Plan FOX. Also one Navy squadron (VPB-146) in its War Diary states that on 18 October it received verbal orders from CG 5th AF to move from Owi to Morotai.

I have queried both Admiral Wagner and General Kenney on the point recently. They both indicate that the enclosed chart of organization is correct but in their explanations leave a little doubt.

Admiral Wagner says: "So for long range searches TF 73 planes, commanders, and tenders worked under me for GHQ, and nominally under Kenney; hence the wording of the orders I issued." Opposed to this are the Daily Fragmentary Field Orders of General Whitehead, CG 5th USAAF, directing CFAW-17 to carry out Search Plan "F" using ten(10) PB4Ys. (These planes were of VPB 101 and 115 based at Morotai) Further, the War Diary of the CURRITUCK stated that that tender with Admiral Wagner aboard departed Moendi 11 October and arrived Manus 13 October; departed Manus 19 October and arrived Morotai 23 October; departed the same day and arrived Moendi 25 October. There would seem to be a little doubt as to whether Admiral Wagner ran these searches or whether CG 5th USAAF did. General Kenney says: "Wagner worked directly for CG 5th Air Force...." but in the case of the Morotai searches it would appear that CFAW-17 possibly worked directly for CG 5th USAAF and not through Admiral Wagner who was at sea in the CURRITUCK. This might support the idea that the units of TF 73 were parcelled out and Admiral Wagner actually directly controlled only TG 70.2.

0939

From your recollections do you think the enclosed chart properly represents the command picture or possibly should the "Naval Air, SEVENTH Fleet" block be eliminated and the "TF 73 Naval Air Forces" block remain as shown but with the arrow changed to indicate that forces were supplied by TF 73 directly to the Far Eastern Air Forces (5th and 13th USAAF's). This chart, incidentally, is not correct in some aspects, but the part concerning Navy land and tender based air, SWPA, is what I'm trying to straighten out now.

I would appreciate any help you could give us to resolve this question. I realize that memories are not always reliable, but I hope maybe yours will provide a missing link.

Sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES
Commodore, USN(Ret)
Head, Special Projects Section

Encl:
(1) Chart "Allied Command Relations"

0940

CONFIDENTIAL

9 April 1951

Dear Mary:

I am sending you a copy of our most recent Command Relation Chart for the Leyte operation. NAVGROUPCHINA figured in these operations to a degree, but whether that degree was important enough to entitle it to a place on this chart is not clear. From some of the dispatches issued by Admiral NIMITZ, as CINCPAC, during this action, it is obvious that you as COMNAVGROUPCHINA were a sort of a liaison, not only between CINCPAC and CG, U. S. Army Forces, CBI Theater, but also with the TWENTIETH Air Force. I presume that you were given this assignment because of the fact that Navy codes and cyphers were not available to the Army, but were held tightly by the Navy. Therefore, if CINCPAC wished to communicate with General STILWELL, or with General CHENNAULT, he necessarily did it through you.

As a refresher, here is a paraphrased example of a message issued by CINCPAC to you concerning increasing the reconnaissance in the South China Sea. This message says:

"REQUEST YOU ARRANGE DAILY RECONNAISSANCE OF SOUTH CHINA SEA NORTH OF CAMRANH BAY - LINGIYEN LINE BY CHINA BASED AIR FOR PURPOSE OF DETECTING POSSIBLE MOVEMENT OF ENEMY FLEET UNITS TOWARDS AREA IN WHICH THIRD FLEET NOW OPERATING X PLEASE ADVISE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED."

It would be of interest how you accomplished this.

I should appreciate your drawing your correct location on this chart in pencil, as the chart is expendable. Perhaps you may decide that you do not belong on this chart, in which case we can make up the liaison process in the body of the book.

Looking forward to seeing you one of these days in Washington, I am, as always,

Your Old Friend,

Encl.(1)

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral M. E. Miles, USN,
Room 4B470, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

CONFIDENTIAL

← 13 April 51
W-2381

0941

13 April 1951

Dear Captain Gano:

I find it necessary on occasions to drop you a note relative to something which I desire, and so far I have met with one hundred percent success. I hope that this good fortune will continue.

I am now writing to you about Merrill O. Stout, 393-22-31, QMC, USN, presently attached to the Training Command of the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island.

As you perhaps know, I am at present shy two officers from my staff. One of them, Captain Joseph J. Rochefort (Ret), reports in May or June; the other has not as yet been selected. I have therefore been seriously handicapped in my operations to solve the Battle for Leyte Gulf. I went to Captain Hamilton and borrowed from him the above mentioned Chief Quartermaster, for a period of several months. I have found the Chief Quartermaster very capable indeed, and extremely helpful in my research work on submarines. This research is not finished, and I desire to hold him a couple months more.

Both Captain Hederman, who now commands the Training Command, and Captain Hamilton, who is the Base Commander, are thoroughly in agreement with my wishes to retain Stout, and have suggested that I write to you concerning him.

If Stout were to remain at the Training Command it would be no problem at all, as Captain Hederman said he is willing to overload himself a little bit to help me out, but it now appears that Stout's two years of shore duty expired last month, and he has submitted a request for duty on a tanker. I only discovered this fact yesterday, else I would have written you long before this.

What I am hoping you will see fit to do is to delay ordering Stout to sea for two or three months, so that I may avail myself of the considerable amount of information which he has been obtaining. This is quite satisfactory to Stout himself, who plainly realizes my need here and is anxious to help.

At the end of this time I hope you will be able to order him to any AO or AK in the Pacific, which seems to be his wishes at this time.

With best regards, I am, as ever,

Yours very sincerely,

Lib 5-6700
Tel 4-2025

R. W. BATES.

Captain R. A. Gano, USN
Room 2809A, Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department,
Arlington, Virginia.

0942

13 April 1951

Dear Casey:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 10th, 1951. I appreciate your thinking about me very much, and I appreciate your recommendation of Admiral Miller. Unfortunately, Miller is senior to me on the retired list, and for obvious reasons it is not our policy to bring in officers who are senior to me.

I wrote to George Towner about two weeks ago and asked him if he wouldn't give me a list of the officers (AVH) of consequence, who are about to retire or who have already retired, and I presume that in a day or so I will receive his reply. I spoke about the matter to Captain Rice when he was up here, and told him that I had a double problem. One of my problems is to find someone who (a) has had considerable staff training in war or combat command, and (b) who is, if possible, a graduate of the War College, or one of the Armed Forces Colleges. I should prefer not to have a flag officer, but realize that I may have to have one.

The other problem is that the President of the War College, Vice Admiral Conolly, naturally does not desire anyone, retired or not, on the staff who doesn't measure up to the highest standards, and therefore he also has an interest in whom I choose to have with me. I appreciate his interest and certainly think that he is right.

In my letter to Towner I asked him if he would not send me the biographies of those officers (AVH) presently retired, and those who may be retired in June, so that I might learn more about each of them from that biography than I can obtain just from a name, or from the statement of a friend.

Someday I'll get down to Washington and thank you in person for your interest in my problems. Until then, I shall just have to say many thanks again.

Please give my warmest regards to Admiral DuBose. With best wishes, I am, as ever,

Your old friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral C.L. Green, USN,
Room 4E552, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0943

27 April 1951

Dear Mr. Southgate:

In view of the fact that making Navy films is a responsibility of your office, I have been reluctant to write to New York about the completion of the movies of the Coral Sea and the Midway Battles. It seems to me that somebody is remiss somewhere in not expediting the completion of these films. If you will remember, I was reluctant to pay any money out to these movie companies until a satisfactory movie had been produced, because if we did so the chances were great that they would automatically take their time thereafter. Certainly I know nothing about what is going on now, but having heard nothing from the companies concerned, I must necessarily feel that these two films have been placed in a deferred category, to be done if and when the companies choose.

I wish you would check up around your laboratory to discover who is responsible for this lamentable delay, and see if they cannot expedite it. If you discover that you cannot obtain action in your area, please advise me and I will have it taken up directly with Admiral Sherman.

I was sorry that you left here without coming down to see me. You had promised that you would return the next day, but for some reason you weren't able to do so. This was disappointing to me, as I might have been able to present some of my views to you on numerous matters.

When may I hear something about the contracts for the Battle of Savo Island? If you will remember, both BuPers and Operations agreed to finance it, so that is settled.

The weather up here is quite wonderful and the New England spring, which you know so well, is beginning to bloom. You should come back!

Best regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Howard Southgate,
Project Supervisor,
U. S. Naval Photographic Center,
Naval Air Station,
Anacostia, D. C.

0944

2 May 1951

My dear Mr. Blair:

For some months now I've been anticipating word from you that the final draft of your film - Battle of the Coral Sea - was ready for showing. As I am naturally anxious to get this movie into the Fleet, I am concerned lest so much time has elapsed since the Washington showing that the Navy will soon forget that such a film exists.

I have written to Mr. Southgate, but as yet have heard nothing, so I would appreciate your courtesy if you would advise me the status of the film.

With best regards, I am,

Very truly yours,

R. W. BATES,
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret).

Mr. Lee Blair,
Film Graphics, Inc.,
245 West 55th Street,
New York, New York.

0945

2 May 1951

Dear Mr. Roessle:

Several months ago I addressed a communication to you wherein I expressed my desire that the movie - Battle of Midway - be completed as soon as possible. For some reason I received no answer from you with relation thereto, and presume that either you did not receive it or had been too busy at the present time to reply to it.

May I ask when the next draft of this movie will be available for study?

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES,
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret).

Mr. Herman Roessle,
Audio Productions, Inc.,
630 Ninth Avenue,
New York 19, New York.

0946

3 May 1951

Dear Captain Parrish:

I should appreciate your kindness if you would advise me as to a situation which has recently developed, and over which I have had no control or previous knowledge.

This refers to the film - The Battle of the Coral Sea - in which the War College is listed as a technical adviser. After the last showing up here by Mr. Lee Blair of Film Graphics, the film was passed and Mr. Blair and Mr. Southgate were told that it met with the approval of the War College. However, there was some concern about the sound effects to be placed in it, and this concern was so great on the part of the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and some of the DCNO's, that I had to explain to them what the plan was. I told them that the music would only be at the beginning and the end, and the sound effects only when air attacks were being made, and in other places where it might be useful. I had hoped to see this completed film before it left Mr. Blair's office in New York.

I wrote Mr. Southgate about this and received no reply. Then I wrote to Mr. Blair and have only this moment received a telephone call from him evidencing great surprise that the War College, and particularly myself, had not had an opportunity to see the completed film in order to see if it met not only with our own conceptions, but also with the possible objections of the High Command of the Navy. You can imagine my surprise when Mr. Blair stated that he had sent a completed copy to Washington over a month ago, and that it had been shown down there and certain minor changes had been recommended.

I have asked Mr. Blair to send me a copy, which he is doing, and I hope to show it here next week. Meanwhile, I should appreciate your interest if you could ascertain for me why the War College has not been notified that this film has been completed, and been given an opportunity to see it. Your assistants may say that the War College's interest is purely in the technical sense, and that the College has no responsibility concerning the film. The reply to this is, of course, that this film is going out with the name "War College" on it, and the War College therefore does have a definite responsibility, and a definite interest.

I am also concerned about the film - The Battle of Midway. We made arrangements to finish the film and to make certain corrections in the script. I personally obtained the money for

0947

this job, and strange as it may seem, two months have now elapsed since the contract was signed, and I have heard nothing more on the subject.

I wrote to Mr. Roessle and received no reply. Last week I wrote to him again. Naturally, the War College has a definite interest in the Battle of Midway film, and must be allowed to review it for the same reasons that are mentioned above under the Battle of the Coral Sea.

May I ask for your cooperation in this matter?

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Captain L. W. Parrish, USN,
U. S. Naval Photographic Center,
U. S. Naval Air Station,
Anacostia 20, D. C.

0948

4 May 1951

Dear Captain Renken:

It was very nice to see you at luncheon today. I appreciate your giving up a little of your time to query me concerning Mrs. Tanaka, as well as about my work here. You are evidently very busy, and on account of this I did not press my desire that you see what I am doing. I do hope that on another day you will be able to come into my office.

Your remarks concerning the importance of the battle lessons of War College battle studies are, of course, correct and gratifying. However, I must point out that these books are written from the viewpoint of the commander, and where problems arise every effort is made to indicate the commander's method of solving this problem. Every effort has also been made to ascertain the correctness, or the lack of correctness, of the commander's decision, based on the information available to him at the time.

I feel very frankly that the body of the book, with the comments on command and the battle lessons evoked from page to page, are more important in the study of command, than are the battle lessons collected at the back of the book. It may seem strange, and it was so at first to me, but many of the battle lessons repeat themselves from battle to battle, whereas the thought processes of the commanders are individual with each commander, and therefore are changeable. On occasions we know exactly how the commander thought; on other occasions we have to estimate as best we can.

I hope that you will get hold of Commander Gibson and will point out to him the difficulties I spoke of concerning the movies - Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway. As a refresher, the Battle of the Coral Sea is finished and has been down in the NPC for over a month. This command has not, in any way, been informed of this fact. I discovered it solely by writing to Mr. Blair of Film Graphics. Needless to say, Mr. Blair was exceedingly surprised that the NPC had thought it well to bypass the War College. As these pictures are essentially War College products, it seems almost ridiculous to me that the NPC would assume the prerogative of determining its quality.

The Battle of Midway contract for the completion of that film was signed some two months ago. I wrote to Mr. Roessle of Audio Productions, who are doing this film, and received no reply. I have, therefore, written to him again. Meanwhile,

0949

I have written to Captain Parrish at the NPC to protest the manner in which these films are being handled. Perhaps everything will come out in the wash, but I prefer to know what the laundry machine and soap will accomplish before I put anything good in it.

There is another film underway on the Battle of Savo Island. The script for this film was originally drawn up by the NPC, but, as in the case of the Battle of Midway, it was very incomplete and, in order to avoid the difficulties encountered with that film, I wrote it myself. I also arranged with Commander Gibson and Commander Manning for the funds to be made available from BuPers and Operations to pay for its production. I have heard absolutely nothing concerning the script, and I don't know whether anything is being done on the picture board for this script or not. Time is going by so fast that if we don't get to the Savo Island picture soon the experience which we have in here will gradually disappear. Perhaps that is the thought behind all of the delay.

May I ask you to use your good offices to ascertain what in Heaven's name has happened to these three films?

Best regards,

R. W. BATES.

Captain Henry A. Renken, USN,
Room 4C539, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0950

8 May 1951

Dear Mr. Blair:

The film has arrived and I plan to show it Wednesday afternoon. I shall then return it to your studios.

As usual, you have been highly cooperative, and I couldn't be more appreciative of our association.

I shall be in New York on Monday evening; also on Tuesday for a session with Audio. If you wish me for any reason I shall be pleased to be at your service. My address: New York Yacht Club.

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES,
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret).

Mr. Lee Blair,
Film Graphics, Inc.,
245 West 55th Street,
New York, New York.

0951

8 May 1951

Dear Mr. Roessle:

I couldn't have been more pleased about anything than I was about the work you have been doing on the Midway film! I had feared that it had gone the way of all flesh, and that would have been quite alien to the wishes of the Chief of Naval Operations, the President of the War College, and myself.

I am delighted that you are so far advanced, and I shall be there to review the picture on Tuesday, May 15th. Commander Paul Hartmann will be up there on Monday to review the picture on your little machine, so that he can check live film to be sure that it is correct on the American side. On Tuesday he and I hope to be able to review the picture in the theater as per your invitation.

I hope that the above meets with your approval. I plan to be at the New York Yacht Club Monday evening, and to return to Newport Wednesday morning.

With many thanks to you for your kindness ~~and~~ⁱⁿ keeping me informed about this film, and with best wishes to Mr. Speidel and Mr. Hanousek, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES,
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret).

Mr. Herman Roessle,
Audio Productions, Inc.,
630 Ninth Avenue,
New York 19, New York.

0952

9 May 1951

Dear Captain Renken:

Thank you very much for forwarding "The Japanese Story of the Battle of Midway!" We had an advance copy of that report, as well as the copy published in the ONI Bulletin in May 1947, so that our story thoroughly embraces the principal features of that OPNAV P32-1002, which you kindly sent me.

It was very thoughtful of you to think of us, and if you discover anything on Leyte Gulf I shall, of course, be glad to have it.

At the present time our translators are furiously working down there - I hope, I hope - and we have already received a considerable amount of Japanese translations from them.

With best regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Captain Henry A. Renken, USN,
Room 4C539, Pentagon Building,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

0953

10 May 1951

My dear Mr. Southgate:

We saw the film of the Battle of the Coral Sea, as completed, here at the War College yesterday. We borrowed Mr. Lee Blair's office copy. Insofar as I can see the film is quite satisfactory, except for two points. One point is, I think, just an error in Mr. Blair's film, but is supposedly not in yours. It was mentioned to me by Mr. Blair over the telephone, and has to do with a statement by CTF 17 in Part II where he had been sighted by a Jap plane. The film here said something to the effect that CTF 17 (gurgles, gurgle) had been discovered. The other point, while not important, is worthy of correction if it can be done.

If you will refer to NAVPERS 91050 - The Battle of the Coral Sea - page twenty eight, the twelfth line from the bottom, it says, "TF 11's fueling operations commenced at about 0800 on May 1st." Also, if you will look at page twenty nine, line twenty two from the bottom, it says, "TF 11 plus the CHICAGO and PERKINS, commenced fueling from the TIPPECANOE early on 2 May and the former two ships were detached at 1630 to join TF 17."

It is quite obvious that one or the other of these two sentences is in error. The one in error is on page twenty eight. I plan to delete the line on page twenty eight which states, "TF 11's fueling operations commenced at about 0800 on May 1st." I plan also to correct in future editions, line twenty two from the bottom of page twenty nine, to read, "TF 11 plus the CHICAGO and PERKINS, commenced fueling from the TIPPECANOE at 0900 on 2 May, etc."

It seems strange that this point was overlooked by all the War College reviewers, by Captain Morison's reviewers, and by even your astute mind. I wonder if there is some manner in which this correction can be made in the copy? I would be satisfied to even have it deleted. As a matter of fact, line twenty from the bottom of page twenty nine which says, "Fueling of TF 11 was completed at 1310, 3 May" appears also to have been incorrect, as the fueling was completed at 1330, according to the War Diary of the TIPPECANOE.

So far as I can discover these are the only mistakes now in the book, and I certainly hope that they can be corrected in the film before you issue it.

Outside of that, how are you?

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Howard Southgate,
Project Supervisor, Naval Photographic Center,
Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D. C.

R. W. BATES.

0954

10 May 1951

Dear Mr. Southgate:

Since writing you the letter with reference to the Coral Sea, I thought it well to inform you that Commander Hartmann and myself plan to be in New York next week to review the Battle of Midway. Commander Hartmann will review a portion of it on Monday with the little machine to check the planes and so forth, whereas both of us will review the full film showing on Tuesday.

I'm informing you about this in case you'd like to be there we would be happy to see you.

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Mr. Howard Southgate,
Project Supervisor,
Naval Photographic Center,
Naval Air Station,
Anacostia, D. C.

0955

10 May 1951

My dear Mr. Southgate:

This is my third epistle to you today. This afternoon I received from Film Graphics the script for this movie. The error that I refer to is in paragraph 36 where it says, "Fueling started 0800 May 1st." Your script was correct from the book. This was an error in typing made within the War College. Actually, it should say "Fueling started 0800, May 2nd."

Forget what I wrote in my letter to you about "1330 May 3rd," as the time when fueling was completed. This was incorrect. The correct time was what is in the book and in the film - "1310, May 3rd."

I am sorry about this date, "May 1st." It is one of those things that is plainly noticeable, and yet we did not discover it until yesterday afternoon when we reviewed the movie for the last time.

With warmest personal regards, and hoping to see you in New York, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Mr. Howard Southgate,
Project Supervisor,
Naval Photographic Center,
Naval Air Station,
Anacostia, D. C.

0956